All I Ever Wanted For You

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All I Ever Wanted For You

by Peri_winkle

Summary

Continuation of Lost In Your Eyes, please read part 1 before continuing to understand what is going on!**

Hannibal and his group have attacked and taken control of Will's small community. During the attack, Hannibal finds an interest in Will and seeks to charm the reluctant captive and help guide him towards what he believes to be Will's true nature. Will is hesitant, but Hannibal starts to slowly grow on him. When he starts to get conflicting feelings, Will must decide if he still wants to escape (if he can) or stay at Hannibal's side.

Somewhat inspired by Limerence by wanderlust96
Check out their work, it's amazing!!

(Rape warning is not between the main pairing, only a small mentioned scene)

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

One

Chapter Summary

I imagine in the first scene in this chapter that the zombie is Garret Jacob Hobbs.

The trickling of the stream combined with the soft chirps of birds flowed into Will's ears as he stood beside his father. They waded in the river, standing like statues as the water flowed over their feet and calves. The sun had just barely risen, making the forest glow. Will took his eyes away from the rushing river to peer up at one of the sun beams. Small particles of pollen floated along the beam's edge, looking like fairies. Will had read about fairies in *Peter Pan.* He imagined they would look as graceful as these particles, like hummingbirds zipping around the woods.

The water suddenly grew warm over Will's feet. A stick of fear pierced through his heart as he tore his eyes away from the mystical scene and looked down. The river was a deep red, water now thick like blood. Will gasped, looking to his father now. The man had gone dead still, the rod in his hands now lowered, dragging in the water. Will followed his icy eyes and found the object of his father's gaze. A figure loomed on the other bank, staring at them with crimson eyes filled with blood. It stood at a crooked angle, clothes tattered and body pale like snow. Several gashes littered its pale skin. They were deep, purple and red. A sound erupted from its mouth, breaking the deep silence Will and his father had created. The sound was a croak, almost like a moan. It meant he was about to strike.

"Run Will," his dad whispered, not taking his eyes off the creature. "Run, I'll distract it and meet you later."

Will was too taken by fear to respond. He wanted to fight, to stand by his father's side, but his body had a mind of its own. As soon as the creature lunged at them with nonhuman-like speed, Will ran. His father grabbed his shoulder and gave his body a harsh shove. Will's body followed the shove as he sprinted out of the river and into the forest.

Grunts echoed through the trees as Will stumbled over sticks and leaves. It wasn't until he heard a blood curdling scream that he froze in his tracks. The scream was like a broken record, echoing over and over in Will's brain. He turned around and retraced his steps. The

screams died down, but still echoed in Will's brain as he crept back to the river. He wasn't sure why he went back, but what he saw would remain in his head forever.

His father laid on the bank, head tilted back and eyes staring lifelessly into Will's. The river of blood lapped over his dad's legs, staining them a deep red. His mouth hung open as the zombie leaned over his body, chewing into his neck. Crunching and squelching noises arose from where the zombie was having a feast.

"No…," Will whispered.

It was too quiet for the zombie to hear, so it ignored Will and continued to eat.

"No!" he shouted. The zombie looked up, croaking at Will as if to say "hold on I'm almost done".

Will reached into his pocket and pulled out the knife he used to gut fish. With no hesitation, he hurdled towards the zombie and tackled it into the pool of blood. It barely had time to react as Will plunged the knife into its chest over and over. His own chest burst with a rush he had never felt before. He felt a smile grow on his face and tears stream down his cheeks. As he tore the body apart, pieces flowed down the river, washing away downstream. Will must've kept at it for at least 20 minutes before the muscles in his arms screamed in protest. His strikes became more and more sloppy. The zombie had died a while ago.

When Will finally ceased his attack and leaned back, he looked back at the river. The magical sunbeams were gone, now replaced with a gray glow. In the middle of the bloody river stood a tall and stoic stag. Its entire body was black and covered in wiry feathers. It gazed at him with a blank look in its eyes. Will looked back down at the zombie and saw the damage he had done.

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Will jerked into a sitting position at a sudden banging. His eyes flew open and his chest heaved with deep pants. His eyes searched the guest room in a wild panic. When he found no

stag, blood, dad, or zombies, he sighed in relief. The banging occurred again before Will realized that it was actually knocking coming from the door.

Being locked in a guest room adjacent to the leader of a cannibal cult wasn't Will's first choice. The bed was the comfiest thing Will had ever laid on, though, and the sheets felt like what WIll would imagine what clouds felt like. His chest ached at the thought that the person who had slept in them before was probably dead by now, but his exhaustion was too great to allow such a thought to disrupt his deep sleep.

The lock clicked, but instead of it opening, Will was surprised that the person was waiting for a confirmation before barging in.

"Come in," Will called, voice still stiff from his nightmare. He also realized his current state, and its vulnerable look. He scurried out from under the blankets to stand next to the bed, running his fingers through his bushy, sweaty curls to try and tame them.

Hannibal appeared in the doorway, dressed in a very different manner than the day before. He was dressed in a very expensive looking 3 piece gray suit. A white plaid pattern ran across the pants, jacket, and vest. He had a buttery white shirt underneath and a similar colored tie to match. There was even a pocket square nestled in the breast pocket to finish the outfit off. His hair was now smoothed and combed back, too. The picture of elegance. Will couldn't hold back the snort he produced at the sight of the man. He tried to cover it up with a cough, but judging by the look he got from Hannibal, it didn't work. The look soon morphed into a small smile.

"You slept well I hope?" he asked, voice sounding just as smooth as his suit looked. Did they iron it or something? This guy was so spoiled- "William?"

Will snapped back from his trailing thoughts and cleared his throat. "Sorry, ye-yeah. It was great."

"Excellent, because I would like for you to join me today." He folded his hands behind his back swiftly. For some reason, the suit seemed to make Hannibal's frame appear larger and sharper. It made Will want to shrink back slightly.

“Join you,” Will repeated, shifting to lean on his left leg. He kept his gaze on his ruffled comforter, no longer wishing to be holding Hannibal's powerful one. Even though Will was an excellent people reader, he couldn’t get a good read on Hannibal. And that left an ugly feeling of unease in the pit of his stomach. Not being able to tell what the man wanted to do with Will was making him very unsettled.

“Yes, I must revisit all of the estates and make sure everything is in order. I would appreciate your company,” Hannibal replied with a small smirk. Will would admit, he was a very attractive man. “I’d like to have your perspective on some things.”

When he finally did meet the other man’s gaze, Will felt a flush fall over his cheeks. The eyes on him were full of pure joy and excitement, like he was asking Will to prom and awaited his answer.

Without many other options, Will shrugged and nodded his head slightly. He would just have to get over his reluctance to be around Hannibal if he were to finally get a read on the man. Maybe while he tried that, a window to escape would open up. He’d have to be smart about it.

“Excellent, I’ll lend you some clothes to wear, and we can begin the day.”

Hannibal rushed down the hall, and Will was almost physically sick from the domesticity of the altercation. The cold murderer was able to put on such an innocent and charming face, and it made Will disgusted. He didn’t want to fall for it, yet the man’s words still managed to make him skittish and turn his face red. Hannibal let Will change privately after handing him a pair of slacks and a white button up shirt. He could tell that Hannibal would much rather him wear something as fancy as the suit he wore himself, but he managed to restrain himself for the sake of Will’s comfort. This was definitely the most Will had ever dressed up, especially with the black dress shoes. Will would kill for a flannel as he tucked the last bit of his shirt into his pants.

When he stepped out of his room, Hannibal had disappeared. The sound of voices echoed down the hallway, and Will followed them downstairs to the kitchen. The kitchen was gorgeous, nothing like the kitchen at Will’s old estate. This one had two island counter tops covered in a white and gray patterned marble. There must’ve been a hundred cabinets covering the 12 foot ceilings. Pots and pans littered the stove as people rushed around, tossing ingredients all over the place. Several others stood aside, mingling and laughing

amongst themselves. Will twisted his hands together, feeling very out of place. He jumped when a soft hand cupped his shoulder.

“I didn’t mean to startle you.”

Will turned his head to see Hannibal chuckling behind him.

“We are about to have breakfast, if you would like to join.”

The hand stayed on his shoulder as he was guided further into the house, through a wide archway into a large dining room.

“You look much better by the way, those clothes suit you nicely,” Hannibal said softly, mouth hovering just close enough to his ear so only he could hear. Hannibal’s hand squeezed WIll’s shoulder, and Will’s nerves twitched in unease.

“I feel very out of place,” Will murmured as he was guided towards the head of the table. The table sat 8, but Will had only counted 7 in the kitchen (including them). He really was meant to have breakfast with them. His stomach was in knots, especially when Hannibal pulled the chair to the right of the head of the table out for Will. Will practically stumbled into it. He sat in awe, muscles tense as everyone around him brought out the food and acted as if this was total normalcy. They talked amongst themselves and started plating their food from the huge display of breakfast foods.

“I wonder, is this your first meal time in a dining room?” Hannibal asked, tilting his head forward to try and catch Will’s eyes, but failing.

The brunette nodded, sitting with his hands in his lap as the people grabbed for the plates at the center of the table. There were plates of foods that Will barely recognized. With the food shortage, there was never a huge variety in meals for the poorer classes. Will had only seen a few large meals like this one at his old estate. Only the wealthy family and the friends they had over would have meals this big. Will would catch glances as he would head back to his small room to have whatever small meal Jack would be passing out that night. He was more accustomed to small sandwiches and bowls of beans. This breakfast looked incredible. There

were berries and fruits that Will had never seen before. The baked goods released a smell that made Will's knees weak, and the sight of the crisp looking juice made his mouth water.

"I hope it is to your liking then," Hannibal said cheerfully as he reached for a plate of what Will guessed was croissants. "Try this, I was able to make some chocolate with cocoa beans we found and made chocolate croissants. I try not to brag, but I do love to use my creative talents in the kitchen quite frequently."

"I've never had chocolate," Will said quietly, watching as Hannibal used a spatula to slide one onto his plate.

"I do hope you enjoy it, in that case."

Will definitely did. He tried not to show it though. The sweetness of the chocolate was amazing, but he didn't want to give Hannibal any satisfaction. He swallowed his satisfied moan along with the first bite of the croissant. He couldn't control himself after that. Will had planned to only eat the bare minimum to work up his strength, being displeased by the fact that he was breaking bread with these murderers. After he tasted that sweet and bitter chocolate, though, that plan went out of the window. Hannibal described every pastry he had to him. The man even poured some orange juice into his cup and watched him chug it with a smile.

"-the solar power does work very well, for the appliances, heat, air condition, and whatnot. It's the running water that seems to be an issue. We'd have to make a water tower for this area. Quite the project that is, though. It typically takes a couple of months for the other communities to build it." Hannibal rambled, Will didn't even look up from his eggs as he nodded.

"That's smart. Must be a lot of resources, though," Will said after he swallowed the last bit of his meal. Even though he wanted to try the other half of the foods, he didn't get to. His stomach refused, feeling like it would burst. "You pump it through the area's old system?"

Will glanced over to see Hannibal nod, chin resting on his folded hands. "We do. I had my expansion plan based on the path of the water filtration systems. The water connects us all."

“H-how do you work in the radioactive zones? Every community is surrounded by them,” Will asked.

Hannibal smiled, and leaned forward into Will’s personal space. His hand came over to grab Will’s chin again. He was really getting sick of that. “We’ll have to work on that eye contact. It’s rude to not look at the person you are talking to. And it’s especially rude to hide such pretty eyes.”

Will jerked back hard enough to rip himself out of the gentle grip. Hannibal lowered his hand, and raised his eyebrows.

“But to answer your question, we created immunity.”

Will stared at him to go on. “I-immunity?”

Hannibal’s smile was something that stirred a dark part in Will, while making his skin crawl at the same time. “Consumption of the infected’s flesh gives one immunity to the radioactive waves. And it must be one’s own species to work.”

Will wanted to be sick suddenly, his stomach lurched at the dark thought.

“Intriguing isn’t it?” Hannibal laughed, patting Will on the shoulder. “So you’ll have to let me cook some up for you before you try and attempt any sort of escape.”

Will swore under his breath, rubbing his sweaty palms on his pants as his mind spun.

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He was stuffed into the musty van once again, only this time he was one of the lucky few to get to sit in the front. He sat pressed between Hannibal and the driver, feeling very uncomfortable, especially with Hannibal's arm dangling over his shoulders. They drove to the

next estate over and hoped out. Will was led into the house, Hannibal's hand having found itself at home resting along the small of Will's back. Will couldn't explain why but he thought for a minute that he was starting to get used to the touch. The thought disappeared just as quickly as it came, though.

They met the person in charge of the house and gathered up all the staff to tell them basically what Will already knew. They told them about the immunity, and those who started to outrage were taken outside and probably over to the border: to be thrown into the radioactive zones. Will shivered at the thought. They weren't killing them, they didn't want to…yet. They were sending out the objectors, so that they will become food for them later on to gain immunity. The ones who stayed complacent were escorted out of the room and had gone back to their jobs. Will stayed at Hannibal's side the entire time, despite his unease. He feared the man too much to pull away from his side. At every estate, Hannibal addressed the people and then met with the "generals" afterwards. They would talk about organization and supplies and such.

Hannibal wasn't lying when he said he wanted Will's perspective on a few things. He asked for his opinion on each set up in each estate. Will gave it to him honestly. There was no reason for him not to, all he wanted to do was to get out of here. Messing the place up would only cause his escape to prove more difficult. And he knew Hannibal would be able to pick up on any tricks if he had gotten the balls to try something. When he shared his trustworthy and creative ideas, Hannibal became even more impressed by him.

It wasn't as terrible as Will had thought it would be. That is, until they got to the last house: Will's old estate. He cringed as they stood facing the front lawn on the porch. Will refused to let his eyes wander over the crowd that was gathering, fearing to meet Alana's or Jack's eyes. He tried to shuffle away from Hannibal, maybe stand behind the few men that stood beside them. That way he could hide himself better. Before he could, though, Hannibal grabbed his wrist.

Will hissed, grabbing the other man's wrist, pulling on it to try and pry himself out of the grip.

"It would be unwise to try and go against me right now." Hannibal hissed back, quiet enough so only Will would hear.

Will sneered at him. "I don't want them to see me."

The man's face softened slightly. He processed Will's words for a moment, before looking behind him. "Fine. Matthew."

A man with short brown hair and a smirk that almost put Hannibal's to shame in the creepiness factor came up next to them. He smiled down at Will, making the captive man turn his gaze back to the floor.

"Take him to the back please while I make my speech, then come over to me when I'm done." Will gaped at Hannibal, suddenly regretting making the decision to not want to be next to Hannibal on the porch. His arm was grabbed, and Matthew started to drag him down the side stairs. Without much choice, Will stumbled along with the man until they were behind the large group of "followers".

Hannibal started his speech, and the grip on Will's arm tightened as he was jerked into Matthew's space. The man stuck his mouth into Will's ear.

"Will Graham, right? I heard about you. The Leader's personal pet, huh? That must be interesting. I see why he chose you."

"Don't be perverted," Will growled, trying to pull himself away from Matthew's disgusting breath.

Matthew chuckled. "Relax, darling. I'm simply making conversation. What seat of power you have, too. Getting to be that close to him all the time. Makes an overthrow pretty easy, wouldn't you say?"

Will froze at Matthew's words. He hadn't even considered killing Hannibal. If he killed him then he would be home free. The place would go into disarray at first, giving Will enough time to escape. Or maybe he could grow some sort of resistance. Matthew seemed crazy, and Will could tell with his empathy that the man would much rather see himself in Hannibal's place. He shivered at the darkness that crept into his mind when he empathized with Matthew. Maybe if Will worked with the lunatic and gathered some other souls, they could pull off an overthrow, and Will could escape in the chaos. They didn't have to be successful, for all Will cared he just wanted to get away from this place.

“You aren’t loyal to him?” Will whispered.

“I’ll leave that up to you. I can tell you aren’t, though.”

“Of course I’m not. Being taken captive will do that to you,” Will said, keeping his eyes on the grass in an attempt to not catch anyone’s eyes in the crowd. Heaven help him if he managed to miraculously catch Jack or Alana’s gazes.

“Why not join him willingly? You’d be quite comfortable if you did. Protection, comfortable conditions, the leader’s right hand man or even lover.” Will felt the man’s tongue almost tap the edge of his ear as he spoke. With a snarl, Will jerked away, finally able to get his personal space back.

“Because I have morals, ones that definitely don’t align with his.”

Matthew hummed, deciding to respect Will’s space for now and didn’t lean closer. “Would you kill him? To get away?”

Will was startled at the question. His mind instantly went back to the nightmare he had the night before. He shivered and felt bile rise in his throat.

“I-” he started, pausing to swallow thickly. “I just want to leave.”

“You could do it. I can tell,” Will didn’t have to look up to see the smirk on Matthew's lips as he spoke.

“What makes you say that?”

“I see it on you. You and me, we are hawks. If we work together, we could have a chance at taking down all of the smaller birds that surround us.”

“Hawks are solitary creatures,” Will mumbled, fighting down the phantom feeling of the thrill he got that one gruesome day years before.

“Which is their weakness. If we work together, however…” he trailed off, giving Will time to consider his proposition.

Will didn’t offer an answer. Instead, he listened to the end of the speech and watched the crowd start to disperse. He was tired from running around all day, and just wanted to be alone for once. He hadn’t had this much social interaction at once in a long time, and it was starting to get to him.

“Will?!”

Fuck. That was Alana’s voice.

Will glanced up and saw Alana standing with Jack, staring at him with glassy eyes.

“Alana,” he practically whispered as the two of them came rushing over.

She completely ignored Matthew as she grabbed Will’s face between her hands and started to examine his face. “Are you okay? How-how are you alive? Didn’t they-” her voice broke and Will forced his eyes to break away from hers.

“Everyone thought they had killed you,” Jack said, placing a hand on Will’s shoulder.

The smaller man tensed at all the physical contact. He jerked slightly to get them to let go, knowing they wouldn’t take it personally. Matthew’s hand remained on his upper arm, however.

“Evidently, they had other plans for me. The leader, he wants me as his assistant or something. I’m not so sure myself,” Will said quietly, huffing out a dry laugh.

“Oh my gosh, Will, I’m so sorry. I mean, I’m so grateful to see you alive, you don’t even understand. But does he hurt you at all?” Alana said as she leaned closer to Will to compensate for not being able to touch him.

Will shook his head, curls bouncing with the action. “No, he hasn’t. Yet.”

“Just, stay alive Will, okay?” Jack said, the stern man that he was. Will rolled his eyes. As if he had control over that.

Before Alana could fuss over him anymore, Will saw a large shadow approach her from behind. He didn’t need to look up to know it was Hannibal.

“Hello,” he greeted them, arms folded behind him and a pleasant smile on his face. Everyone perked up. “I don’t mean to interrupt, but I believe you were supposed to meet me after I finished, Matthew.”

“I apologize, sir,” Matthew purred. “We had a bit of a distraction.”

“I’m Jack Crawford, and this is Alana Bloom. We used to work with Will, and were concerned for his well being,” Jack said, standing tall and proud, totally unafraid in the face of the cannibal.

“Oh, I see. He is quite well, as you can see. Living quite comfortably as my assistant.” Hannibal looked at Will as he spoke, eyes burning into Will’s. Will had to snap his eyes away, hating the way Hannibal’s gaze made his stomach twist.

“We are like family to him, and just want him to be okay,” Alana stated. With every comment, Will shrank more and more into himself.

He was starting to get extremely uncomfortable with the conversation being directly about him. He hated this attention and just wanted some solitude. Shifting on his feet and squirming in Matthew’s hold, he grit his teeth and resisted the urge to lose his temper.

“As I said, he is quite safe and comfortable in my care. I will make sure he is perfectly content, so there is no need to worry.”

“He is perfectly able to talk for himself, too,” Will grunted, feeling everyone’s eyes on him now. “And I wouldn’t say that I’m content with being forced into this job against my will.”

“Ah yes, you would have rather chosen death instead, correct?” Hannibal asked, hand coming forward to snatch Will’s chin again.

Will wrinkled his nose in annoyance and grabbed Hannibal’s wrist with his free hand. He ripped the hand away from his chin, and looked Hannibal straight in the eye. “Yes, you are correct in that. I had chosen death, and yet you had taken my life away in a different way. You forced me into this ridiculous position to use my empathy as a tool to help you with your governing, which I find to be extremely rude and irritating.”

Hannibal’s eyebrows shot up at Will’s outburst. Instead of a slap, punch, or yelling (like Will expected), Hannibal laughed. He laughed a rich and deep laugh, which caused Will to drop Hannibal’s wrist in surprise.

“You are right, I apologize for that. It seems as though I had let my curiosity get the best of me. Your empathy simply amazes me. It is a gift that I would hate to see wasted.” Hannibal paused, but not for long enough for Will or any one else to interject. “We must get going, however, there is still much to do back at the main estate.”

Will bid his friends a rushed goodbye as Hannibal took hold of Will’s other arm. He was taken from Matthew and escorted back to the van. Will’s heart broke at being pulled away

from his friends once again, but he didn’t fight it. He gave them one last longing look before he was shoved back into the middle seat.

Two

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal bond some more, and Hannibal gives Will some gifts.

“Thank you for joining me today, Will.”

Will’s eyes remained on his lap as Hannibal spoke to him. He rocked to the left slightly as the van hit a bump.

“Your insight was a tremendous help, and I deeply appreciate it.”

“Sure,” Will mumbled, finger picking at his pants.

“This morning’s breakfast was a rare occurrence, the entire household eating together. Typically everyone eats their meals on their own time, though we share whatever is in the fridge.”

Will tightened his eyebrows in confusion at what Hannibal was saying. He knew the man saw this expression, too, because he chuckled and continued speaking.

“I understand your probable desire for solitude after the day we just had. I can imagine the gift you have can likely cause a decrease in one’s social capacity. So, you don’t have to worry about any more interactions.”

Will really was starting to hate how well Hannibal could read him.

“I simply request that you have dinner with me. Allow me to prepare something for you.”

With gritted teeth, Will mumbled, “I’m not eating people.”

Hannibal laughed. “I understand your reluctance, and will respect it for the time being. You will have to, however, at some point.”

The van came to a stop. They arrived back at the main estate. By now the sun had set and the sky was covered in an inky blackness.

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“Tell me about your family, Will.”

Will froze from where he sat at the counter. He had parked there, watching Hannibal prepare them a lovely vegetarian meal on the stove that was stationed at the island counter.

“If this is a method to try and psychoanalyze me again, it’s a rather lazy one,” Will quipped back, folding his arms on the cool marble counter and leaning onto them.

Hannibal flickered his eyes up from his work, but only for a second before they fleeted back down. He spoke sweetly, despite Will’s passive aggressiveness. “I would simply like to know you better.”

Will sighed. “I never knew my mother. She passed when I was born. My father…he taught me all I know. He died when I was 22.”

Short and simple.

“Sickness?” Hannibal inquired, and Will didn’t answer. “Accident?” No answer. “A zombie?” Hannibal caught onto this as a yes when he saw Will’s eyes flicker up to his own.

“Ah, I am so sorry, Will. Did you witness it?”

“I don’t want to discuss this anymore.”

Hannibal hummed. “It is a rather difficult topic to discuss. Painful, still, I imagine, despite the time that has passed to allow for healing.”

“Tell me about your family,” Will shot back in a sharp tone, trying to turn it back onto Hannibal. The other man was unfazed, however.

“Both my parents died when I was very young. Killed by one of the gangs that run rampant out there.”

“So it seems the concept of family is foreign to us both,” Will said, the aggression in his tone slowly bleeding away.

“So it seems,” Hannibal agreed. “Have you tried to find family in Miss Bloom and Mister Crawford?”

Will shrugged. “They were always there for me when I had no one.”

“That sort of stability is important for people. Humans are social beings.”

Will snickered. “Yeah, well, some of us are quite lacking in that department.”

“I’d say you are quite the opposite of lacking. You can connect more so than anyone else. Your overwhelming sense of connectivity leads you to try and stray from socialization. Yet you still crave that stability of having someone close to you, though that must be a hard thing for you.”

“I’ve always wanted a dog,” Will said, and surprised himself with his words. Apparently they also surprised Hannibal, as the man looked up from his work once again. He wore a charming smile, one that made Will’s chest twist uncomfortably.

“I can imagine they would provide good company for you. Someone you can connect to who isn’t as complex as a human.”

Will hummed in agreement, watching as Hannibal plated the meals with intricate movements. It looked extremely professional. Will was quite impressed, but he would never admit that. They sat at the dining room table, which was very much absent just like how the kitchen was. Just the two of them. Will would’ve been a lot happier if it was just him, but the less people, the happier he was. This wasn’t so bad.

“What else do you like, Will?” Hannibal asked after listing off what the dishes were. Will retained none of that information.

“What, is this a date?” Will asked, cutting into his eggplant.

“If you would like it to be,” Hannibal said with a smile.

“Not interested, thanks,” he paused for a minute. “I like to read.”

“What kinds of texts? I have a rather diverse insight from my travels.”

“I enjoy Poe, King, Dante,” Will listed. “Darker texts interest me the most.”

“They do give you quite the thrill. I cannot imagine how it must feel to read them with your gift, either. That thrill must feel rather authentic.”

Will sighed. “Can we stop bringing it up? I’d rather just treat it as if it were a disease and try to avoid it in conversation.”

“I find it disheartening that you think that way, William. You should cherish what you have. It is spectacular.”

Will placed his fork down to take a sip of water.

“If you wish to discuss something else, though, I will respect it.” Hannibal waited for Will to say anything, and when he didn’t, Hannibal continued. “How is the food? To your liking I hope.”

Will nodded. “It’s excellent, actually.”

They chatted about Hannibal’s experience with cooking and made some more small talk. Will’s passive attitude soon faded almost entirely, and the interaction grew to be rather pleasant. It was a sweet domestic scene. Sadly, it grew late, and Will was starting to yawn.

“Excuse me,” Will said as his eyes watered from the yawn that just erupted from him.

“I do believe that that is our cue to retire. It is rather late.”

Hannibal stood, taking their dishes to the sink. He washed them, and Will couldn’t help but feel obligated to dry them. They finished cleaning and made it upstairs. Hannibal walked Will to his room (in order to lock the door, Will remind himself). Will stood in the doorway as Hannibal cupped his cheek briefly before bidding him goodnight. It was a loving gesture, one that Will hated to admit he slightly craved. He stood there, staring at the now closed and locked bedroom door, wracking his brain for excuses for these dreaded feelings that kept flaring up. He would have to put a stop to them soon. The space where Hannibal had laid his soft hand burned on Will’s face, tingling from the loss of pressure.

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Will woke up before Hannibal did this time. He washed himself up in the bathroom, using a bucket of water that was placed there the day before. He dressed in some clothes that someone had put into his dresser and sat on the window sill. The window had been sealed shut, sadly, so he didn't get the privilege to enjoy the fresh air. He looked out and saw a few bodies bustling around. They were carrying various parts and pipes around the yard, preparing to get the water running, Will guessed.

He heard the lock click and the door crack open, but he didn't look up.

"Will?" Hannibal's voice rang out, sounding rather cheery.

Will hummed, loud enough for Hannibal to hear him. He didn't feel like speaking up quite yet, still enjoying the silence he had been basking in minutes before.

"Good morning," Hannibal said softly, walking up to Will to lean against the trim of the window and follow Will's eyes outside. "Ah, yes, the water system. Quite the project."

Will hummed softly again, leaning his forehead against the cool glass. He tensed when he felt a hand very hesitantly touch a couple of his curls.

"The morning light gives you a very beautiful glow - I'd love to capture it on paper sometime."

Will snapped his head to Hannibal, causing the hand to drop from his hair. "You wanna draw me?"

Hannibal smiled. "Indeed, I believe you'd make an exquisite model."

A small blush peppered Will's cheeks as he looked away and stood back up. "I'll pass."

Hannibal hummed in disappointment, but he didn't push. "I'd like to show you something today."

Will followed Hannibal down the hallway and into the other side of the mansion. On the way, they passed a few people who Hannibal greeted. The people politely greeted him back before flicking their eyes over to Will in a rather judgy way. Will squirmed uncomfortably. The doors they walked up to were made of a thick oak and creaked as Hannibal pushed them open. Will's mouth dropped open as he gapped at the interior of the room.

Inside was the largest library Will had ever seen. The room had to be 20 feet tall with 3 walls covered in books. Will really felt like a kid in a candy store now. There was a walkway that lined the walls that one could access using a ladder. The ceiling had a gorgeous painting covering it, resembling a scene from heaven. Will completely ignored Hannibal, walking right past him, into the room. He stepped in a circle, trying to take the room in its entirety.

He heard Hannibal chuckle. "I was hoping you would like it."

Will stuttered breathlessly. "This-This is the- the biggest library I have ever seen. It's amazing."

"And it is all yours."

Will snapped his eyes to Hannibal in shock. "Mine?"

"Yes, I want you to have it. You may use it at your discretion."

"That's…very generous of you. Thank you," Will said, giving Hannibal a small smile. Small. Smile. Nothing more. He had to remember the true nature of this man. "This is all to help distract me, though, isn't it? While you work."

Hannibal's mouth tightened. "In a way, yes. It will help with that, but I also wanted to give you something that you would enjoy. I will forever cherish that sparkle your eyes had when

you saw this room initially."

Will groaned and turned away. "Stop that."

"Stop what?"

"Flirting, trying to gain my favor."

"I apologize, for I cannot help it. It is difficult to avoid."

Will glared at him again, crossing his arms. "So what, am I going to be locked in here for the day?"

Hannibal sighed. "Just until I finish up some things."

~<>~

The solitude was actually something Will really enjoyed. Hannibal brought him breakfast and some snacks for later before he left. The door and windows were locked, and Will was trapped once again. He didn't mind it, though. He soon got lost in all the literature that surrounded him. He had powered through 3 books and was on his fourth when the door opened. He didn't look up. Instead he stayed curled up on the couch he was on and flipped to the next page, intent on finishing the chapter he was on at least.

He expected Hannibal to say something, but he was only met with silence. He discovered that it was in fact not Hannibal, however, as soon as he heard the footfalls that approached the couch. Those were not the familiar sounds of Hannibal's steps. Glancing up, he was met with the black eyes of Matthew. The man stood in front of him, a couple feet away, smiling sickly.

"Hello again, Will," he purred, clasping his hands in front of him.

Will closed the book slowly, and uncurled his legs so he sat up fully now. “Where’s Hannibal?”

“He asked me to take you to come get you to meet him outside when he gets back. Apparently he’s got a surprise for you.” Matthew spoke mockingly of Hannibal, seeming to be disgusted by the man’s actions.

Will stood up and nodded, not taking his eyes from Matthew’s form. He still felt too uncomfortable to meet his eyes.

“Have you given more thought to my proposal?”

Will wanted to roll his eyes but stopped himself. He knew that he needed to get out of here, and this was his only opportunity so far. He would either have to risk it and take it, or be forced to wait for the next one. And who knew when that would be.

“What did you have in mind?”

“I’m secretly building an army,” he whispered, giddy like a child on christmas. “We have 23 people so far.”

“And whose ideology do they follow, if they follow any? Do they plainly want anarchy or your new leadership?” Will asked.

Matthew took a step forward, making Will want to take one backwards, but he was stopped by the couch. “They wish for my leadership. And if they are lying, I’ll kill them myself.”

“Great,” Will mumbled, dropping his eyes to the floor. “We’ll need more than that, though.”

“Would you follow under my leadership?” Matthew asked, his voice painted with longing and hope.

Will shook his head. “No. I have no desire to stay here.”

“Alright,” Matthew sighed, stopping his invasion into Will’s personal space. “But I have your loyalty to rid this place of Hannibal Lecter?”

A flash of pain rushed into Will’s chest. It was fast and faded just as quick as it came, but it still came. It surprised Will that he would even hesitate on this decision. He pushed it aside in frustration and nodded, finally meeting Matthew's eyes. “Yes, I am slowly gaining his favor. I believe that I can get him in a vulnerable enough position, so we can take him down.”

“And once he is gone…?” Matthew asked, looking to ask what Will’s plans were.

“I am going to…leave this place. Find a safer secluded place.”

Matthew nodded. “Well, it’s dangerous out there, but whatever you wanna do. I’ll keep gathering people, you keep gaining his trust. We’ll need it.”

Will nodded in agreement, ignoring the sour feeling his heart gave him at the thought of betraying Hannibal like that. The man was evil, pure evil. Will needed to avoid the stockholm syndrome and keep his mind focused on the task at hand.

That would be harder than he thought, though, as he followed Matthew out of the library and into the driveway. There, a van was parked out front, and from the back emerged a ruffled looking Alana and Jack. Hannibal joined them soon after, a large glowing smile on his face when his eyes landed on Will.

Three

Chapter Summary

> Alana and Jack make a surprise appearance. Hannibal forced his eating habits onto Will, and the two bond some more. We also meet Francis.

“Will!” Alana yelled. She ran forward, her cherry red patterned dress flowed behind her as she jumped into Will’s arms.

He laughed, unable to suppress a doopy grin. He wrapped his arms around her waist as she wrapped hers around his neck. The embrace felt like a breath of fresh air for Will. He was never one for hugs, but after having a nice quiet day in solitude, he felt recharged enough for one of Alana’s hugs. She nuzzled her soft face into Will’s neck, pressing her lips there for a moment. Typically, Will would’ve cringed and tensed at the affection, but Alana was different. He relaxed in her hold, rubbing his cheek into her silky hair.

“We missed you so much,” She whispered, finally pulling away from Will to look him in the eyes.

She rubbed his cheek lovingly with her hand and pulled away from his arms to let him greet Jack.

“You guys just saw me yesterday,” Will chuckled, allowing Jack to give him a quick embrace. “What are you doing here?”

Alana smirked up at him. He loved when she made that face. “We were asked to be transferred.”

“Transferred?” Will repeated, looking up to see Hannibal watching them fondly.

Hannibal straightened his 3 piece suit, tugging on the maroon vest and smiled. “Yes. I have heard of their impressive work and wished to recruit them here. Given their top positions at their previous estate, I believe they would be an excellent match here.”

Will narrowed his eyes at Hannibal, tightening his lips. “And the other reason?”

Hannibal sighed, folding his arms behind his back. “That, and I believed that I was wrong to tear you away from the stability you had at your old estate. I wanted to apologize and… attempt to mend my wrong doing.”

Will lost the strength to keep Hannibal’s gaze and flicked his eyes over to the van. He considered it for a moment, knowing fully that this was an attempt on Hannibal’s end to try and win Will over. It was textbook manipulation, and Will was very aware of that. Despite this, he couldn’t help but cherish the act. He let a smile crawl back onto his face, unable to squash down the fluttery feeling he got in his chest.

“Well, thank you,” he mumbled.

Hannibal stepped closer to Will before placing a hand on his shoulder. He squeezed it lightly, rubbing his thumb into the soft muscle. “Of course, mylimasis.”

“My-what-?” Will started but was cut off by another man.

“I unloaded the supplies, sir. Everything is all set.”

Will felt his soul freeze. An instinct flared up inside him, one similar to what he felt when he saw Hannibal, only this one was worse. This man, with pale eyes and a scarred lip, had darkness in him. He refused to look at anyone but Hannibal, giving him a shy and insecure appearance. Will could feel it, though, his empathy made his hands tremble as he felt that darkness edge itself into his heart. It growled with hunger like no other.

“Thank you, Francis. You may retire for the night, if you would like. Tomorrow I’d like for you to help the others with the water system.” As Hannibal spoke, he kept his hand on Will’s shoulder. It was the only thing that kept him grounded in that moment.

“B-But- what about the hunt tomorrow?”

“Mason needs one more day to finish his tasks at his estate, so we will do it the day after tomorrow. Don’t fret,” Hannibal said, sliding the hand on Will’s shoulder to the nape of his neck. The hold felt reassuring under the dark pressure of Francis’s presence. Will nearly melted under it.

Francis nodded with a grunt and turned to leave. Just before he did, though, his eyes flickered to Will’s. It was only for a moment, but it caused Will to shrink down even more into himself. He turned his body towards Hannibal’s unintentionally, taking a breath to calm himself.

“Alright, shall we go inside? Miss Bloom and Mr. Crawford, Francis will show you to your rooms,” Hannibal declared, still not lifting his hand from Will’s neck.

Alana and Jack cast him one last longing look before they grabbed their bags from the van and followed Francis inside. Will kept his eyes on their fading figures, even as Hannibal started to address him directly.

“Shall we have dinner? I’d love to hear about your day in the library.”

Will let the hand drift to his mid back and guide him up the front stairs. They mozzied over to the kitchen where a few people were already cooking. They greeted Hannibal quietly, eyeing Will discreetly. Will still noticed the stares and shrunk into himself, leaning onto the counter. Hannibal shed his jacket and vest, rolling up his shirt sleeves as he opened the fridge. He hummed quietly as he prepared their dinners. Will figured he probably didn’t want to talk in front of others since he didn’t make another attempt to coax Will into more conversation. Will appreciated it, not enjoying the thought of others listening to them. Hannibal probably knew that it would cause Will to be less responsive to him, so he stayed silent as he cooked in front of Will. His quiet hums had lulled Will into leaning his head down onto his crossed arms. He closed his eyes and listened to the sizzling of meat and soft lullaby.

When Will looked up after dozing for a bit, he saw Hannibal plating the food. He smiled at Will and motioned to a pair of cups filled with water. Will stood up and picked them up, watching as Hannibal grabbed the plates and made his way over to the stairs. Of course, he probably wanted to eat somewhere private as well. Will followed him hesitantly into the master bedroom. His eyes followed Hannibal as the man walked right to the window where a small table and 2 cushioned chairs sat. They arranged the table and took their seats.

"I apologize for my silence, I simply do not wish to have others listen to our intimate conversations. I treasure them too much to have them spoiled by unwanted ears," Hannibal said as he cut into his meat.

Will looked down at his plate, eyeing the sauce covered meat and various veggies. "You just know that I won't give you raw answers if others are listening."

Hannibal chuckled. "Indeed, I see you as the type of person to save his best commentary for more private settings."

"What kind of meat is this?" Will inquired suddenly.

Hannibal sighed, putting his fork and knife down. He folded his hands and placed them over his mouth for a moment in thought. Will's stomach twisted in an ugly way. He hissed, leaning back away from the table.

"Yeah, no way." No way was he eating a fucking zombie. *A person.*

Hannibal seemed to read his mind. "Technically they were not human. You would be ingesting a "zombie", not a person."

Will laughed darkly. "I don't care what it's referred to. I'm not fucking eating it."

Hannibal tensed at the language Will used. "Please refrain from using words like that, It's impolite. I understand your reluctance, Will, but it is necessary if you want to survive out

there."

Will's eyes widened as he looked up at Hannibal finally. "You-...you aren't," he paused trying to get his words together. "I am not going on whatever hunt you were talking about before. That's actually hilarious if you think I'll go on that with you. No, its *fucking* hilarious."

"I did not mention the hunt-"

"But that's why you want me to eat this." Will cut Hannibal off, earning an even darker glare.

"Fine. Yes, that is why I made this meal for you. One can also think of this as the only chance one has at an escape attempt," he paused to let that sink into Will's mind. "The only way you leave here is by eating that. You must have a full portion for it to work, so I advise you to finish the plate."

Will ran a hand through his curls in frustration. He slammed his fist into the table, too, feeling his chest twist in anger. He knew that nothing else worked to protect them from the radiation. Any type of covering proved to fail as they had researched decades ago. This consumption was rumored to work (Will had read it in several texts that day in the library), but it was considered too taboo to be common practice. Hannibal was right.

"Will," Hannibal started but Will let out a growl of anger, shutting him up.

"I know," Will said through tight teeth, running a hand over his face. "I know, just…give me a minute."

He knew Hannibal was smiling right now. He had gotten his way, like he is used to in every situation. Will hated giving into this man; he hated giving him that satisfaction, but he knew what he had to do. He wasn't sure when this rebellion would occur and knew he had to eat this shit before that. Eventually he had to.

“Is this a constant thing that needs to be done? Like daily? Or once and done?” Will asked after a minute of him breathing through his nausea.

“We’ve had quite a while to experiment with it and have found that one must consume radioactive flesh at least every 60 days. I hope that will work for you. I do not believe that is as bad a condition as if it were daily. Quite a comfortable compromise, if you ask me.”

“I fucking hate you,” Will grumbled, grasping his fork and knife in each hand.

With shaky hands, he cut into the tender meat and stabbed it.

“You won’t mind if I vomit on the carpet, right?” Will whispered, watching as Hannibal reached behind him.

He grabbed a trash can and placed it between them on the floor. “I’d prefer if you refrained from that. For you would lose any radioactive protection effects, and quite frankly it would offend me as the chef.”

“And we wouldn’t want to offend Hannibal, now would we?”

Will looked up to see Hannibal staring at him, eyebrows raised and an amused and surprised expression on his face.

“What?”

“That is the first time I have heard you say my name.”

Will felt his cheeks flush for a moment.

“I will admit that I rather like hearing you say it.” His expression turned seductive, and Will tore his eyes back down to his plate. Hannibal chuckled. “Was that a good distraction from your heavy thoughts about eating this meal? I have found that flirting with you distracts you quite well.”

“Just, shut up for once, geez. Let me just…collect myself,” Will managed to say, taking a shaking breath.

He ignored Hannibal’s glistening eyes towards him and slowly swirled the meat into the sauce.

“I hate that I have to do this. And I hate that you love it so much,” Will grumbled, raising the meat into his mouth.

He chewed once before swallowing it like a pill. Instantly, nausea flared up his throat, trying to push the meat back up and out. Will closed his eyes, and forced it back down. He shuddered and continued to cut off another piece, small enough for him to swallow whole.

“Would it help if I fed it to you? Maybe that would make it easier,” Hannibal purred, still trying to catch Will’s gaze.

Will swallowed another piece and exhaled shakily. “What did I say about talking?”

“That you only give me raw answers when we are alone. I like to think that makes me special,” Hannibal said like a wiseass.

“Yeah, you’re special alright.” He swallowed another piece, chewing it more this time. The flavor was actually pretty good.

“Was your day special at least? I do hope you enjoyed the library as much as I wanted you to.”

They talked about the books that Will had come across for the rest of the time they ate. Will grew less and less tense as the conversation actually worked to distract him from the horrors on his plate. He would never admit that the flirting was a way better distraction. They talked even after they finished eating, watching as the stars started to glow in the sky next to a crescent moon.

"...but of course I agree that his philosophy still has a point. Despite its obvious faults."

"And I just invalidated all of the so-called faults that you pointed out."

"Except for the last one." Hannibal said with a smile.

"Because the last one is pointless."

Hannibal scoffed. "Please. You say that because you can't disprove it."

"Okay, so what's wrong with having one fault, huh? You discriminate because you dislike one thing?"

"Well, I could agree with that. What *is* wrong with having one fault?" Hannibal rested his cheek into his palm, looking at Will with *that look* again.

He narrowed his eyes. "It can be wrong in the case when the fault is kidnapping, cannibalism, murder, and giving people stockholm syndrome."

"Stockholm syndrome?" Hannibal repeated, looking at Will pointedly.

"Y-yeah," Will stammered, feeling very uncomfortable now.

“Does that mean you share a certain affection for me?”

“ *Forced* affection, Hannibal. It’s forced and manipulated, which is sick. And I’m talking about your other victims, not me. What happened to the conversation we were just having about the philosophy book?”

“There is my name again. And each time I hear it I love hearing it more and more. I must admit, however, you are the only person I have taken under my wing like this. No one else here has this stockholm syndrome you are talking about, but you admit that it is affection.”

Will squirmed, standing up now. He stacked the plates and silverware, ignoring Hannibal now. “I’m done with this conversation.”

Hannibal followed him like a puppy as Will walked down to the now empty kitchen and started washing the dishes. He watched quietly, handing Will the cups to wash, as well.

“I hoped you enjoyed my cooking, as painful as it was to consume,” Hannibal said after a while, drying the last dish.

“Enjoyed is definitely not a term I would use to describe that experience."

Hannibal hummed sadly. "Well, I shall walk you back to your room then."

Will stayed silent as Hannibal walked him back up the stairs and to the guest room across from his room. Hannibal bid him goodnight in quite a cheerful tone, but Will only answered with a small "night" and closed the door. He grimaced when he heard the lock click. He also wanted to smack himself for his softening. He was growing more relaxed in front of Hannibal, starting to actually enjoy their friendly and flirty banter. Will needed to squash those feelings immediately. Hannibal was manipulative, charming, and dangerous: Will had to keep that in mind going forward. Hannibal was dangerous, and he still needed to escape. He was still a captive, no matter the amount of comfort and flattery Hannibal provided. The locked door confirmed that.

Four

Chapter Summary

> Will, Alana, Jack, and Matthew have a lovely dinner together. Will gets woken up at the crack of dawn for "the hunt".

The next day was quite uneventful. Will stayed in the library once again while Hannibal dealt with some other things and whatever. Probably organizing for “the hunt” tomorrow. Will grimaced at the thought that he would most likely be forced to join. He was still fighting the urge to get sick over what he ate the night before. It rose in his throat over and over, and the constant battle to keep it down was getting exhausting. Will felt disgusted with himself. He wanted to pound his fists into Hannibal’s stupid smug face, too. Or maybe strangle the man. He was daydreaming of how he would murder the bastard when Matthew opened the door sometime after the sun had set.

“Hello, Willy,” he greeted, making Will peer over the book he was currently skimming.

“Don’t call me that,” he said grumpily, not happy to see the man. Though he guessed it was better than seeing Hannibal.

Matthew frowned and walked over to him. “Sweetie then?”

Will glared once again. “Why are you here?”

He smirked, looking like a venomous snake. “Hannibal asked for me to get you some dinner and then escort you back into your room.”

“Is he really that keen on avoiding me now?”

“Not really. He was kinda reluctant to send me to do this, but they needed him to help fix an issue with one of the pipes. Then he has to help prepare some supplies for the hunt tomorrow. I heard you are gonna join us.”

Will rolled his eyes. “Yeah, by force.”

“Are you going to try and run?”

Will’s eyes snapped up to Matthew for a second to express his surprise before he looked back at the closed book in his lap. He shrugged. “I’m not sure I’ll have the chance. Hannibal won’t let me out of his sight.”

“There will be plenty of weapons available,” Matthew shrugged back.

“Yeah, as well as plenty of other men whom I’m assuming have pledged loyalty to Hannibal. I don’t think I’ll survive long if I try anything. Not that I even want to. I just want to leave. You can kill the man for all I care.”

Matthew hummed, motioning for Will to stand. “That’s good to hear, because I’m still gathering people for my little overthrow plan. I’ll still need you for that. Speaking of which, I happened to recruit your little friends too, the hot maid and angry guy with the weird patch of facial hair right here.” Matthew tapped his chin, smirking at Will’s surprised expression.

Will stood up and walked beside Matthew towards the kitchen. “I’d much rather hear this from them, sorry but I don’t trust you too much yet.”

“You will have to soon, since I’m your only ticket out of here.”

Will grimaced as Matthew opened the fridge, pursing his lips at the contents.

“But that’s why I asked them to meet us for dinner. We’ll be fine. Everyone is out now and won’t be back until way later tonight, so we have plenty of privacy.”

“Will?” Will perked up at Alana’s voice. He watched as she walked into the kitchen with Jack right behind her. She strolled right over to where the brunette was seated at the counter.

“Alana, Jack,” Will sighed in relief, welcoming the hug that Alana gave him. Jack sat next to him, placing a hand on Will’s shoulder reassuringly.

“Nice to see you again,” Jack said with a smile.

“We heard about yours and Matthew's plan, and we’re in. We gotta get out of here,” Alana whispered, taking the seat on the other side of Will.

“Did…” Will paused, swallowing the bile that was rising in his throat. “Did they tell you about the immunity?”

“Yeah, they did.” Jack sighed and Alana nodded.

“We had some this morning actually…I, I wasn’t sure I was going to be able to do it,” Alana’s voice shook as she spoke. She wrapped her arms around herself, obviously uncomfortable with the subject.

“Ok, so then we’re all set to leave then,” Will whispered, looking up at Matthew who was warming up some leftovers in a pan and the oven. “All we need is a large enough distraction from you and your overthrowing plan.”

Matthew smiled, stirring the contents in the pan. “Currently gathering up a small army, which contains a lot of Hannibal’s closest men actually. Mason and Francis are on board, along with a few others that you have yet to meet. I’m sure you’ll come across them soon, probably on the hunt tomorrow. The one we need to look out for are Chiyoh, Hannibal's personal guard

who just returned today. The rest are irrelevant, sheep wandering around the estate like the zombies out there."

Will asked Matthew for the names of the people they had recruited. A few of them were Beverly Katz, Brian Zeller, Frederick Chilton, Abel Gideon, Jimmy Price, and the Verger twins. The Verger twins included Margot and Mason. Will had heard Mason's name mentioned the night he met Francis. He wondered if that guy had the same darkness that Francis, Matthew, and Hannibal had. Francis' aura seemed to be a deep and disturbing one that was held beneath layers of restraint. Matthew's was less intense, a more fun and immature darkness. Hannibal's was sophisticated and precise. It was justified and controlled. Will was terrified to see any of their dark sides, especially when they were out hunting. Tomorrow was going to be a horrible day for Will. He wasn't ready for more trauma.

Will, Alana, Jack, and Matthew talked more about the specifics of their plan. They talked about Will's closeness with Hannibal and ability to get him alone for an ambush. Once he was gone, they would be able to take the estate. Matthew guaranteed them that Francis was the perfect choice to go against Hannibal. Will would simply lure him in and Francis would get the best of him. Once that was over with, Will would meet up with Alana and Jack to escape. He made sure that Matthew knew he wasn't interested in helping take down Hannibal's supporters. He had enough help with that, and whatever happened to the community after Will left wasn't his concern.

"I'm sad that you won't want to stay with me here. Once he is gone, you'll be free anyway. Why leave?" Matthew pouted as they ate the food that he prepared. It turned out that it was leftovers that Hannibal had cooked up early that morning before he left. Apparently he knew he would be working late tonight and wanted to make sure Will was still fed. Thank goodness it was a vegetarian meal.

"I'm leaving, Matthew, and that's the end of it."

Matthew shrugged, figuring he shot his shot. They finished their conversation and bid each other good night. Alana and Jack went to their rooms on the first floor while Matthew walked Will up the stairs.

"I wish you would stay," Matthew said like a dejected puppy.

“I know you do, but that’s not happening,” Will said, turning around in the doorway to his room. He leaned against the door, signaling his desire to shut it.

“Can I get a goodnight kiss instead?” he leaned forward, like Will would even consider saying yes.

“You can get a goodnight door slammed on your face if you don’t move it,” Will answered, face remaining neutral.

He closed it as Matthew laughed in an amused tone. Will sighed in relief when he heard Matthew lock the door. After he wiped himself down with some soap and a bucket of fresh water that was brought up earlier, he nestled under the covers with a book he brought with him. He was reading *The Republic* by Plato when a knock tapped on his door. Will looked up in surprise.

“I’m not kissing you Matthew, leave me alone,” Will called out, not even looking up when the door clicked and cracked open.

“Will a kiss still be provided to those who are not Matthew?”

Will ripped his eyes up when he heard Hannibal's familiar voice. He blushed and stuttered. “I-ah no! Why does everyone flirt with me in this damn house?”

Hannibal stepped further into the room, looking freshly showered and dressed in comfortable sweats. He stood next to Will’s bed, hands folded behind him. “Maybe because your beauty is so enrapturing. Though it displeases me to hear that Matthew has tried to make any advances on you.”

Will rolled his eyes. “Don’t worry, the little creep isn’t going to succeed.”

“Ah, so that means you are all mine then.”

Will wrinkled his nose in displeasure, staring at the wall in front of him. “I am not yours, I’m not a thing to be owned.”

Hannibal hummed in agreement. “I apologize, of course you aren’t. You are rather difficult to win over, to be frank.”

“Says the cannibal that’s trying to court me.”

“How was your day? I wanted to come in here and apologize for my absence today. I missed your presence.”

Will looked down at the blanket, suddenly self conscious that he was in bed with Hannibal standing over him. “It was fine. Just, in the library. The only place I’m allowed as a prisoner here.”

“And dinner was to your liking?”

“Better than last night, yeah.”

“Good,” Hannibal said cheerfully. “I’m sorry if the library is starting to become boring for you. Hopefully getting out tomorrow will help your likely present restlessness.”

“Yeah, because watching you and your psycho friends kill zombies is all I need to see.”

“I believe a change of scenery will do some good. You have been cooped up for too long,” Hannibal reached forward to brush a curl from Will’s forehead. Will let him do so, for some reason. The hand brushed down Will’s jaw to his chin. It slowly nudged his head to look up at Hannibal. The man’s thumb lightly rubbed Will’s chin, dangerously close to his lower lip. Will parted them, exhaling a shuddered breath.

“I wanna get some sleep now,” Will said after a moment, feeling a flurry of conflicting feelings well up inside him. It pulled him from the intimacy of the moment, making his chest heavy.

Hannibal nodded. “Of course. Good night, mylimasis.”

With that, Hannibal walked back to the door before turning around and telling him that it would be an early morning. Will rolled over to face away from him as Hannibal hit the lights and closed the door, locking it after him.

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The next morning came way too quickly. Will hadn’t even heard the knock at his door. Instead, he was woken up by a soft hand on his shoulder. He blinked his foggy eyes open to see Hannibal standing over him.

“Good morning, Will. I knocked but I don’t think you heard, so I apologize for coming in unannounced.”

Will groaned in response, not feeling like speaking yet. He sat up and rubbed his eyes, clearing them of the nightly fog. Glancing at Hannibal, he saw the man was dressed in an outfit similar to the one he wore when they first met during the invasion: an outfit perfect for hunting. He found that Hannibal was also holding a bundle of clothes in his arms.

“I have brought you some clothes that are more appropriate for our outing today. I hope you find them to your liking.”

Hannibal placed them on the bed and then sat on the end of it, eyeing Will softly. The drowsy man ignored the look and threw his legs off the bed. He stretched slightly before taking the clothes and trudging into the small bathroom that was attached to his room. After washing his face with the lukewarm water from the bucket, he dressed in the cargo pants and loose shirt Hannibal had provided. The pants fit fine, but he had to tuck the shirt into his trousers as it was a bit too large. It exposed a large part of his shoulder and smelled suspiciously like

Hannibal's natural musk. Will wrinkled his nose at the thought of Hannibal purposefully giving Will his own clothes to wear.

When he reentered the bedroom, he found Hannibal had left his spot on the bed and was at the door. It was partially open and he was speaking with someone on the other side quietly. Listening carefully, he recognized the hushed voice as Francis. Will made sure to make his steps noisy, so they knew he was also present.

"Will, are you all set?" Hannibal asked as Will tied on his boots.

Will nodded, ignoring Francis' peering eyes from where he stood at the door.

"Perfect, shall we meet the others then? We have a full day ahead of us and we should stay on time."

Hannibal laid a hand on the small of Will's back, much to Will's displeasure, and followed Francis down stairs to where a group of people had congregated. Will recognized Matthew, but no one else. They introduced themselves as Mason Verger, Abel Gideon, Chiyoh, and Tobias Budge. Will could feel all of their bloodlust and corruption through his empathy. He tried to ignore all of their sharp eyes that seemed to look right inside of him. He felt Hannibal's thumb massage the muscle in his lower back.

After everyone was introduced, they started to move outside. Hannibal leaned down into Will's ear.

"I know their presence must be overwhelming for you, but stay with me and you'll be just fine," Hannibal whispered, walking with Will to a van parked in front of the building.

The sun was still in the process of rising, so the atmosphere still held a sort of twilight lighting. There was a slight chill in the air and everything was covered in a light dew. Will was thankful for his thick boots that prevented the dew from seeping into them and dampening his socks. Everyone loaded into the back of the van while Francis sat in the driver's seat. Hannibal nudged Will into the middle seat once again and sandwiched him between the 2 other men.

Will sat, body tense and rigid as the van backed out of the driveway and down the road towards the edge of the territory. He heard chatter and laughter from the back of the van. Their voices were too muffled for Will to make out, though he did think he heard his name several times. Maybe he was just paranoid. Within several minutes, they arrived at the edge of the community. Will had never been here before, granted he never had left his old estate before all of this.

They hustled out of the van and gathered at the flimsy wooden wall that surrounded the community. The fence was not really necessary, only to help keep the people inside and keep them from wandering into the radioactive zone. The zombies fed on the radiation so they rarely left the zones to attack the people in the clean zones. Of course the death of Will's father was an unusual case scenario.

Everyone in the group held a type of gun and adjusted several straps on their bodies that held various types of knives. Much to Will's surprise, Francis held nothing, though. Hannibal was also only handed a large hunting knife. Confident bastards.

"What would you like to use for the hunt, Will?" Hannibal asked quietly.

Will stood quietly for a moment. "I…I don't want anything."

"I would feel more comfortable if you had something to help defend yourself. It is quite dangerous out there."

Will huffed, "A handgun is fine, I guess."

Hannibal smiled and nodded. He waved at Matthew who reached into the van and grabbed a simple matte black Glock 19. Hannibal took it and held it for Will to take. Will grasped it with slightly trembling hands. Francis and Mason took the front of the group and climbed over the fence. Everyone followed soon after. Hannibal held his hand out for Will to take, but Will ignored it, hoping down from the fence without help. He watched as the group crept into the woods, looking like a pack of prowling wolves.

Five

Chapter Summary

The hunt ensues. Warning for violence and kinda graphic descriptions. Very short small scene were rape is mentioned.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The woods felt suffocating as Will trudged over the dirt and weeds alongside Hannibal. Will felt like he couldn't catch his breath, but he tried to keep it quiet. He took small shallow breaths, enough so he wouldn't pass out. He wanted to fight Hannibal on going on this hunt, but he knew that that would just cause pointless trouble. The last thing he wanted to be was some annoying insubordinate captive. He'd rather save himself from the embarrassment. He knew Hannibal would drag him on this no matter what Will's attitude was.

The woods were silent apart from their crunching footsteps. The summer heat was starting to ramp up as the sun rose steadily. Thankfully, the sky was slightly overcast and the trees were very thick, so they weren't in direct sunlight. Will still felt a light sweat break out on his forehead at the damp humidity of the woods. There weren't any birds here, as the radiation caused them to die or become zombie-like. There weren't any critters around either. Any organism that was affected by the radiation lost any sort of "humanity" or mindfulness/consciousness they had. They became cannibalistic and savage and angry.

They walked for about a half hour when suddenly Francis and Matthew came to a halt. They froze, looking deep into the brush like tigers spotting their prey. Slowly, everyone squatted down and Will did the same. Francis slowly advanced forward, crawling on his hands and knees. He made absolutely no noise as he crept forward. Will finally spotted the "prey". It was a small looking woman with blue pale skin. She stood about 20 feet away, stuffing her face with what looked like a rabbit or squirrel.

Will felt Hannibal lean into his ear again, his voice was barely a whisper. "We hunt one by one, each getting a turn to attack a subject. We stand by in case they need help, but otherwise they are on their own."

Zombies had greater strength and senses, so Will was surprised to hear that they hunted individually.

They watched in silence as Francis got about 5 feet from the zombie, crouching behind her. He waited a few seconds before he lunged forward with a loud yell. It startled Will, making him jump slightly. Francis jumped onto the zombies' back and plunged his teeth into her neck. The zombie roared and tried to throw Francis off of her, but he remained glued to her back. Will watched in horror as he ripped a chunk of her flesh out with his teeth. He spit the flesh onto the dirt and before he went in for another bite, Will saw his teeth had been sharpened like razors and were very bulky. Artificial teeth, of course.

Francis was a man with 2 sides to him. I am a shy and insecure person with a darkness buried deep inside of me. Another foreign entity lives in me, dragon-like and savage. I kill to become more like it, so it can absorb me, so we can be one. My actions reflect a difficult past filled with abuse. I hold lots of anger and emotions from which I let the Dragon feed on. I don't see my killings as murder, I am simply changing people. They change in order for me to become more of who I am supposed to be. I have trained for years and have decades of discipline under my belt. I use this and my fighting skills to effectively execute my desires.

This is my design.

Will startled quickly, snapping out of his head, coming back to reality. Francis had finished killing the zombie, having practically decapitated it with his teeth. That seemed almost entirely impossible, proving to Will this man's savagery.

Mason started clapping rather loudly next to them. "Now, what a show, ladies and gentlemen."

He was quickly hushed by Matthew who smacked him lightly. Why they had to be silent? Will didn't know. He figured the noise would draw the zombies to them. Maybe these men were so obsessed with the idea of a hunt that they didn't want to make it easy.

Will watched for the rest of the day as each member of their group took their turn to mutilate a corpse. They went in a large circle, slowly making their way around the outside of the community. Each time they killed, they would drag the zombie back to the fence and leave it

there. Will guessed that there were probably people who would keep track of their hunt and come collect the meat soon after it was slaughtered. An effective but fun game to get food.

Gideon was an unstable killer. He lacked confidence in the way that hinted to Will that he lacked identity. I am unsure of myself and of who I am. Despite that, I am intelligent and meticulous about my kills. At times, I have a burst of anger, though. I have a short temper and could become violent at any time. I enjoy seeing my victims suffer, cutting into the zombie's flesh and gutting it carefully. Each movement is carefully measured but full of rage. I may not have a total grasp of who I am, but at least I have fun while I do it.

Matthew was a cocky bastard. I kill to impress and please. I stare at Will Graham the entire time I wrestle with my prey. I shot it a few times to incapacitate it. Then, I grab a rope that I had been carrying and throw it over a tree branch. As my victim tries to escape, I mock it and tie a noose around its neck. I just in the air to yank on the rope. I find dark humor in the way my prey struggles helplessly. I want Will to be impressed with my bidding, but he won't meet my eyes. He's too lost in calculating my actions, but that's good enough for me.

Mason was very similar to Matthew. I am one who finds humor in my kills. I am amused by them and make jokes as I do my bidding. I am a sadist and disgusting man who finds sexual pleasure in my acts. I am severely inconsiderate of others and do as I please. I care not for others' judgment, simply wanting to do what pleases me. I take pride in rape as I assault my victim, laughing even moreso when Will gets physically sick over my actions. I see my victims as simple animals, worthless beings beneath me: pigs for the slaughter.

Tobias is more like Hannibal in his kill. He is cultured and refined. I see my victims as instruments. I play them as I take their lives. I am a simple man, viewing my murders as a concert of sorts. I find my actions to be like a symphony, beautiful and meticulous.

Chiyoh was a harder case. She was quiet and strict, here simply for Hannibal. I am close with him, throughout childhood I have known him and care for his well being. I kill simply for food, there is no darkness in it, rather a muted numbness. I do not care, more or less.

Hannibal is a man of perfection. He leaves Will in the care of Matthew, despite his hesitancy, and goes in for his kill. I kill and consume those whom I believe are beneath me. I slice my victim's throat, killing them effectively. I kill with surgical precision and with little emotion. I don't have rage, simply a desire to hunt. I enjoy harvesting and creating my meals from scratch; it is an art for me. I am obsessed with killing those who I view as beneath me. I am

addicted to it. I would love to kill everyone here, but I refrain from that for now. I need them for this community to succeed, so I will make due.

Will blinked in surprise at the last part. Hannibal hated all of these people here on the hunt with them. He sees them as a rude and disgusting crowd with little to no taste. He wants them all dead, served on silver platters on a long dining table.

This is my design. These are my designs.

~<>~

Will didn't want to move when Hannibal finished dragging the body to the fence. He felt Hannibal's black eyes on him, and didn't want to meet them. He knew what Hannibal wanted next, he knew what he would have to do and cringed. His heart hammered in his chest, making his lower jaw tremble. He felt like he was going to get sick again, especially when Hannibal placed a light hand on his shoulder.

"It is your turn now, mylimasis," Hannibal whispered, nudging Will forward.

"I can't," Will hissed, struggling to keep his stomach contents down.

"You can, you have the ability, Will. You just have to find that ability in you," Hannibal answered, guiding Will deeper into the forest.

They walked for maybe 5 minutes. 5 minutes that went by way too fast. Will spotted the zombie standing near a tree, jumping up to try and catch a bird that sat perched on a branch. The bird looked rather ratty, having patches of missing feathers and rotted skin. Will felt Hannibal give him a harsh shove forward and the others giggle behind him. The zombie heard the noises, and turned towards them. It spotted Will, eyes widening. It groaned and stomped forward slowly. It had targeted Will and started advancing. Will felt his breath leave him and he stepped back.

“We won’t be helping you, Will,” Hannibal’s voice echoed through the silent forest. “You must do this on your own.”

“I-I can’t! I-Its gonna kill me!” Will shouted back, not taking his eyes off the approaching zombie.

“Not if you take its life first,” Hannibal countered. Will could hear the amusement in his voice.

“You’re sick, all of you are fucking demented and sick,” Will said, though it sounded more like a sob. He also doubted anyone heard him as he felt like he couldn’t speak above a whisper at that moment.

With shaky hands, he grabbed his gun and held it at his side. The zombie was about 10 feet from him now. A nasty smell invaded his nose as the creature got closer. The group Will had been traveling with had backed up quite a bit from them, now. They wanted Will to be in his own element. They wanted Will to know that he was getting no help whatsoever. The smell of the rotting flesh of the zombie brought him right back to the bloody river, and he coughed out a sob as the creature got closer. Flashes came to his mind. His father’s dead eyes, the zombie’s blood covered face, Will slamming the knife into the zombie’s chest over and over.

He had gotten lost in his flashbacks, and didn’t realize the creature in front of him had gotten close enough to lunge at him. Will cried out, landing on his back with the zombie on top of him. In doing so, he dropped the gun in surprise. The zombie went to bite his neck, but Will managed to gain his reaction time once again. He grabbed a stray branch that he landed on and used it to lodge it into the zombie’s mouth. It was thick enough to give him some time. He stared into the blood shot eyes and instantly imagined the eyes of the one who killed his father.

Will wasn’t going to die like his father did. Hannibal was serious about not helping him.

He grunted, shoving the stick harder when the zombie tried to scratch at his arms. He hooked his legs around the zombie’s hips and flipped them so he was on top. As soon as he had the upper hand, he could feel a twisted grin break out on his face. The zombie growled as Will used all his strength to use the stick that muzzled the zombie and slammed the zombie’s head into the ground over and over. Blood spewed everywhere, getting all over Will’s face. Will

cried out when the zombie finally recovered from its surprise and threw Will off of him. Will flew a few feet away, hitting the ground hard. The zombie charged at him, giving him barely enough time to recover. Will scrambled to the side, feeling bruises start to form along his torso.

Will scrambled right towards his fallen gun, feeling the zombie latch onto his ankle. It sunk its teeth right into Will's calf. Will screamed in pain, but wasted no time in flipping onto his back, and aiming the gun at the zombies head. He fired 2 shots into its head, causing it to detach from Will's leg and lean back on its knees. It was obviously dead, body frozen in a kneeling position. That didn't stop Will, however. He kept firing shots into the zombie's chest. He huffed a laugh as he shot the zombie over and over, emptying the entire clip into it. Even after it was empty, he continued to pull the trigger, not fully believing it was empty.

He didn't want it to end. Will barely had control over his actions or thoughts at this point. He reeled the butt of the gun back and slammed it into the zombie's head. It landed on its side with a thud, making some dust puff up into the air around them. Will was about to slam the butt of the gun into its head another time, when he felt a presence next to him.

He hadn't noticed Hannibal approaching him until he saw a hand coming to grab the gun from him. Will gasped, whipping to the side and ripping the gun away from Hannibal's wandering hand. He clutched the gun to his chest and stood up, taking several steps backwards. He knew he looked wild right now, just like the men standing in front of him. He wanted to be sick. He was just like them; he wasn't a killer. He wanted to believe that he wasn't, but when it came down to it, he enjoyed the thrill of the act. He found a sick enjoyment in taking that things life, just like how he found enjoyment in those stupid texts he would read. He never wanted to admit it, but ever since he killed that zombie years ago, he was addicted to that feeling. The books were only books, so he could ignore it. Now, however, he had done it again and that feeling was set in stone.

Hannibal motioned for the men to take the body away, as he tried to approach Will once again. Will backed away though, and with every step Hannibal took forward, Will took one back. He clutched the gun to his head as he pressed his hands against each side of his head.

"You-you did this! You made me into this! You sick fuck!" Will shouted, shaking his head roughly.

“I simply helped guide you to your becoming, Will. This was always inside of you, you just needed the right push to get it out.”

“No! No! You drove me to kill! Anyone would have done that if they were in my place,” Will said, feeling like he was going insane.

“No, Will, not everyone would have worn an expression of pleasure as they did that. And not everyone would have emptied an entire clip into their victim, after bashing their head several times.”

“I-I-” Will stammered, losing his steam finally. “I was…self defense-”

“That does not explain the feeling you obviously had while you took its life. You enjoyed it, admit that to yourself. It is evident enough.”

“No, no I’m not like you,” Will whispered, finally letting Hannibal get close to him.

The man gently took Will’s hands from his head, and took his gun, tucking it into the waistband of the back of his pants. He dropped one of Will’s hands in order to run a hand over the back of Will’s head, stroking his sweaty curls. Will tensed as Hannibal tried to pull Will into his chest. He ripped his hand from Hannibal’s and gave a harsh shove at his chest, pulling out of the hold.

“Don’t touch me,” Will snapped, wrapping his arms around himself and starting to walk deeper into the woods.

“Will, where are you going?” Hannibal sighed, sounding like a tired parent.

“Getting away from you demons!”

Hannibal jogged after him, reaching out and snagging his upper arm. Will whipped around and tore his arm out of Hannibal's grip once again.

"William," Hannibal said, voice soft. "It is dangerous out here, especially at night."

"I don't care. I don't want to be here anymore."

Hannibal laughed, despite Will's panic. "Is this your grand escape attempt?"

Will didn't answer. He simply stood there, staring at the dirt with wild eyes. His body started to tremble from the adrenaline he used before. He curled further into himself.

"You were incredible, Will. You are a breathtaking person, and I am so very impressed and proud of you. I need you to take a few deep breaths for me," Hannibal said, stepping forward again, and Will let him. He took a few shaky shallow breaths as per Hannibal's instructions. "And I'm going to need you to let me take care of you now. Let me help you. You're hurt."

Hannibal's hands came up to grab Will again, but the brunette startled once again. "No! No, I'm not like you. You did this to me!"

Hannibal huffed a dry laugh again. "I did no such-"

"Yes you did! You-you were just curious what I would do. Someone like me; someone who thinks how I think. Wind him up, and watch him go." Will stepped back and instantly flew his fist into Hannibal's cheek. "Apparently, this is how I go."

He roared as he tackled the larger man and straddled him in the dirt. He was able to take advantage of Hannibal's surprise and landed a couple more punches. As he raised his fist for another hit, though, Hannibal grabbed his fist and threw Will off of him. Hannibal charged at him, but Will was able to roll to the side and get back to his feet. He crouched, fists raised as Hannibal eyes him. The man's face was red and nose bloody. His ash hair was ruffled and messy. His expression would've shaken Will to his core if he wasn't running on so much

adrenaline. Hannibal looked ready to kill. They eyed each other for a second more before Hannibal jerked forward. Will gripped Hannibal's shoulders as the man grabbed his waist and shoved him into a tree. Will gasped for air as he elbowed the back of Hannibal's skull. He brought his knee up to jab Hannibal in the stomach, but a hand caught it before he could.

Hannibal lifted Will's knee high enough so he lost balance. He fell off from leaning against the tree and onto the ground again. Hannibal was back on him, and they rolled and wrestled in the dirt. Will managed to land a solid enough punch right at Hannibal's temple. That gave him enough time to try to scramble away. As his feet kicked at the dirt, Hannibal recovered from the punch and grabbed Will's ankle, pulling him back to lay underneath Hannibal.

Hannibal's hands were instantly on him, flipping him so he was on his front. Will's face was pressed into the dirt, as Hannibal pressed a knee into Will's lower back. His hands were pulled behind him and a pair of handcuffs secured them into place. Cheater.

"That was unwise, William," Hannibal growled into Will's ear.

He grabbed the back of Will's shirt and hauled him to stand once again. Hannibal didn't give Will much time to collect himself before he threw the man over his shoulder. Will squawked, kicking his legs.

"What the fuck!? Put me down!" Will screamed, feeling his face glow a deep red. He jerked violently, and yelped as Hannibal almost dropped him on his face.

"Move like that again and I won't hesitate to drop you. Relax, Will," Hannibal snapped, bouncing Will to readjust his weight before walking back to the camp.

By now, the sun was close to setting and the heat was starting to die down. They had made a complete lap around the community, and returned to the fence where the van sat, already running. Will was thrown into the van, sandwiched between Francis and Hannibal once again. Will kept his head down, feeling his eyes burn with frustrated tears. His body still wouldn't stop trembling. His body burned in pain from the bruises and scrapes he got from his tussle with both the zombie and with Hannibal. His calf hurt the most, though. The bite didn't feel too deep, but his pants were stained with quite a bit of blood from the injury.

They returned to the main estate soon enough, and Hannibal let Will walk on his own this time. He did keep a hand on Will's elbow, though, guiding him into the house and up the stairs. Will's head was starting to feel fuzzy, then. The voices around him were starting to sound muffled and his vision was blurring. He felt like he was dissociating, unable to stop it. He let himself be led into the master bathroom and heard the rush of water. The next few moments were blurry to him; he felt like he was floating through it. He heard a soft voice next to him but couldn't make out what it was saying. The handcuffs were taken off, but he barely had feeling in his hands or body. He vaguely felt someone undress him and lower him into the tub. As a cloth was scrubbed into the skin on his arm, he felt himself slip deeper into this weird trance.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Will :/

Six

Chapter Summary

> Will is salty at Hannibal and takes some time for himself. He realizes some new feelings he may have, and prepares for the uprising.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will felt like he blinked, and when he opened his eyes, he was laying in a bed dressed in soft sweats and freshly bathed. Will jerked violently and searched the room around him. He looked over and saw Hannibal sitting in the bed next to him, except he wasn't under the covers like Will was. His long legs were crossed at the ankles as he read from a book in his lap. His right hand was bandaged, the majority of the bandages encased his knuckles. He also had a pretty bad bruise on his cheek and a small cut in its center. Will's hearing seemed to finally return to him as he listened to Hannibal's soft accented voice read from the pages. He felt a spike of fear as he thought he could only hear gibberish, but he soon realized that Hannibal was reading in another language.

He glanced back at the ceiling, feeling like his body was still slightly floating.

"Is that Russian?" Will asked, wincing at how harsh his voice sounded. He cleared his throat to try and fix it.

Hannibal shut the book softly and looked over at him. Will didn't meet his gaze, only felt as Hannibal's gaze sunk into him. It was a chilling and penetrating gaze, one that was heavy enough for one to feel as soon as it was on you.

"Lithuanian, actually. My native tongue."

Will didn't mean to start small talk, finding that he would much rather not do that at the moment. He didn't respond for a moment, trying to get his brain up to speed. Everything was

still fresh in his memories, just as he had left it. But where did he go? After they got back, he couldn't remember a thing.

"Did you drug me?" He finally asked, unsure if that was the true answer to his lost time.

"We did not. You seemed to have disassociated quite intensely when we got back. You became completely unresponsive I'm afraid. It is good to see you back with us again. I was becoming rather concerned if I will admit," Hannibal chuckled very lightly at the end, trying to lighten the mood. He failed to draw even a lip twitch from Will, though.

"Disassociation," Will repeated, testing the word in his mouth. "A common reaction to a traumatic event."

"Indeed, mylimasis," Hannibal said, voice soft and quiet.

"A traumatic event. You… traumatized me."

"I simply wanted to-"

"Guide me towards my becoming," Will finished dryly. "And what the hell does that mean? You want to turn me into a killer? Take advantage of my empathy to make me do your bidding?"

Will could only imagine the expression Hannibal was making when he sighed rather loudly.

"I only want for you to embrace your feelings. *You* cover them with your empathy. The only one taking advantage of your empathy here, is you, dear Will."

"S-so, you're saying that I have these authentic instinctive feelings that I blame on others because of my empathy. And you want to draw them out, to prove to me that they are truly my own. And not anyone else's that my empathy picks up."

“Precisely,” Hannibal said with an exhale.

Will felt a laugh bubble in his chest. It started as a chuckle at first, and then slowly turned into a full out laugh. He started to belly laugh, a bit of a hysterical one if he were being honest. Tears collected at the corners of his eyes as the laugh seized through his body.

“I don’t even know what to make of this,” Will sighed, smiling after his fit of giggles subsided.

“Make of it as you will. You can accept it on your own time.”

Will wanted to punch Hannibal in the face again as he spoke of finding pleasure in killing as a condition, as if it were a case of diabetes or epilepsy. As something out of their control, something they would just have to live with and maintain.

“This wasn’t the first time I killed someone,” Will mumbled, still staring at the blank ceiling, hands folded over his chest. He could feel them fully now. They were bandaged at the knuckles. His cheek also throbbed with a dull pain.

“I know,” Hannibal said, like a smug bastard.

“No you don’t,” Will snapped. “You *assumed* . You didn’t *know* .”

“I figured as much. It was blatantly obvious. I just am missing the story to it.”

“The zombie that killed my father, I killed it after,” Will said simply, as if it carried no emotions. “And I liked it.”

Hannibal hummed. “It’s okay to like it.”

“No it’s not,” Will sighed. “It shouldn’t be.”

“I believe that it is. It’s a beautiful thing.”

Geez, this man was twisted. And it terrified Will that he was slowly finding out just how similar he was to him, too.

Will remained quiet as he pushed himself up with clenched teeth. His entire body hurt. He could feel several bruises all over himself, causing him pain with every movement. He was thankful that Hannibal stayed where he was while Will wobbled over to the bathroom. He relieved himself and dared to look into the mirror.

His hair was getting long. It curled over his ears and along his neck, creating a crown around his head. He had a bruise on his face, matching Hannibal’s. His wasn’t as bad, though, as Hannibal had held back a great amount during their fight. Pulling his shirt off, he counted 5 more bruises on his torso and found a few more on his legs. He could see bandages scattering his body, covering the several scrapes that littered his skin. A rather thick bandage was wrapped around the bite on his calf. With a quick splash of cold water on his face, Will returned to the bedroom to find Hannibal already dressed in a full suit. There was a small pile of clothes on the (now neatly made) bed.

“If you change, we can go downstairs and have some breakfast.”

Will snorted. “So you can use the fresh meat?”

Hannibal looked up with a cocked eyebrow. “Yes, actually. Maybe a quiche of some sort?”

Will rolled his eyes, taking the clothes into the bathroom so he could change.

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The next few nights were hell for Will. Everytime he closed his eyes, his mind was filled with pictures of bloody and mutilated bodies. All of the stories that he had read over the years were starting to have a new meaning to him. They were creating a fascinated and dark feeling in Will's chest that he could no longer hide from. It was as prominent as ever now, once those feelings were discovered, they remained permanent in one's person. He was disgusted with it and with himself. He would sit in his bed and blame himself for having come to this.

It was similar to stages of grief for Will. He had been in denial for so many years, and was now going through the anger and depression stages. One could say he was grieving his old self, his old mindset, as he fought with accepting this new version of himself, if he even wanted to call it that. He didn't even want to consider it a side to himself. He wanted to keep telling himself that it was just Hannibal and manipulation and stockholm syndrome. The more he thought about it, the more he knew that that was only an excuse.

He remained in his room for the next few days, wrestling with the anger stage of his acceptance process. Hannibal stayed away, understanding perfectly well why Will was feeling what he was feeling. He allowed Will to have his space, to simmer in his anger. It would be for the best, anyway. The more time and space he gave to Will, the easier Will will be able to move on from this stage and come that much closer to acceptance. Will hated that Hannibal knew exactly that and knew it was best to give Will space. Part of Will wished he wouldn't though. And he wasn't sure if that was because he knew that it would interrupt the acceptance process, or if it were because he missed the man's presence. He still refused to leave the confines of his own four walls, even refusing to go to the library.

He would sink into his nightmares every night, conjuring up images that his mind made up from the stories he had such a fascination for and from the hunt. He would drown in nightmares every night, waking up sweating and gasping for air. He'd cry, trying to erase bloodied bodies and pleased feelings from his head, as he tried to avoid falling back to sleep as well.

Each day he would wait for letters from Matthew, Alana, and Jack. It had become too dangerous for them to talk openly about their plans, so they decided to start communicating through written words. It was easier for Will, giving him the day to consider the words and brainstorm a response and ideas. So far, they had 43 people in their estate who were committed to joining the uprising. They had picked a date and spread the word to other communities. There turned out to be a lot of residents unhappy with the authority imposed on them. They were growing tired of Hannibal's rule and were either in favor of Matthew's leadership instead, or just wanted a chance to escape this hell like Will, Alana, and Jack. Alana wrote to Will that a few others would be escaping with them. Some were Beverly Katz,

Brian Zeller, Frederick Chilton, Jimmy Price, and Margot Verger. They had no more interest in the community or Matthew than Will and his friends.

Either way, the overthrow would cause enough chaos for those who wanted to leave, to leave, and for those who wanted to challenge Hannibal, to challenge him all they liked.

Will's job would be to Hannibal's lure. He would lure Hannibal to Francis who would take him on while Matthew would lead the others to take down Hannibal's small number of supporters. Matthew expressed his desire to be the one to kill Hannibal, since he would be taking the "throne" in the end. Will could tell that Francis wasn't going to live up to that, though. Even though he was very agreeable with it and swore to Matthew he wouldn't take the kill, Will could see his true feelings through his empathy. Francis wanted to slaughter Hannibal. He had murderous intentions and Will wasn't about to get in the middle of that. Instead, he stayed silent, keeping his thoughts to himself. Whatever didn't affect him, he didn't care for.

Despite his altering mind, he still fought for the uprising, only wanting to escape.

Some afternoons, he would see Hannibal standing outside his window. The man would either be directing other workers or helping with the work himself. Will would watch quietly as Hannibal would wear nothing but long pants and a thin white linen shirt and shovel the dirt trenches. His dark sun kissed skin would collect a coat of sweat, and Hannibal would pause every few minutes to tilt his head up and drag the back of his head over his shiny forehead. Will found his eyes lingering on him for way longer than necessary in these moments. He would find himself raptured in the image of Hannibal, head tilted up, mouth slightly open as he panted from his labor. He'd smack his cheeks lightly and turn back to Alana's pretty cursive script on the letter that lay forgotten in his lap.

He'd get about a sentence or two in before he'd start daydreaming. He would imagine a life at a small secluded cabin near a beautiful river. He imagined what it would've been like if he and Hannibal had met in a normal world. Would Hannibal and him be able to grow so close that they'd be able to be real friends? Would they have been more than that? Will blushed at the thought of being more with Hannibal. He chewed his lip at the desire he got to be able to experience a normal life with Hannibal. He would grow angry at his desire to even want a normal life with Hannibal. He wanted to keep telling himself, a monster is a monster, no matter the suit they appear to be wearing, but he knew that lecture was losing its meaning to him. He liked Hannibal, and there wasn't a thing he could do about it. He wanted to hate Hannibal. He wanted to crumple and throw away the cute little notes that Hannibal would leave Will with his dinner outside his door every night. He wanted to chuck the food against

the wall, but he found that he couldn't. He found that his chest stuttered slightly at the sight of the kind words Hannibal would write.

Here's a rapturing text of French poems, in English of course. I hope you will find them as beautiful as I did. I noted my favorites. Enjoy -H

Today Mason managed to get stuck in one of the old water pipes. I wish you were there to see it; it was quite comical. Enjoy dinner -H

I found this flower in the woods today. It reminded me of your eyes. -H

I wish for you to have a lovely day, Will. -H

With each note there would be a plate of delicious vegetarian foods and sometimes a bonus gift. A book, the flower, a sketch, a fresh bucket of water for him to wash himself with. Will realized just how thoughtful Hannibal was. He didn't continue to force the meat on him, now that he had had enough to last the 2 months or so, until he'd need some more in order to be safe in the radioactive zones.

It was a beautiful morning the day before the uprising. The sun was bright and high in the vibrant blue sky. There was a cool refreshing breeze that flowed through the community. It poured through Will's window and cooled his sweaty nightmare fueled body. He was surprised when he heard a bird outside as he pulled on his pants. Maybe the world was getting better, or better than it currently was.

Will used a dull razor to clean up his face in the cracked mirror. Alana had snuck it to him, but Will knew that Hannibal knew as well. He was surprised when the man didn't say anything, and it only caused his chest to flutter even more. It was a dangerous move on Hannibal's part, and it proved that he was aware of Will's current mental conflict, knowing that the large sign of trust would only tip the scales in Hannibal's favor. Will washed his now smooth chin and waited for a shadow to appear under the door. Hannibal always delivered Will's breakfast and dinner.

The familiar steps sounded from down the hall as Will raised his knuckles to the wood of the door. He knew Hannibal could also see Will's shadow from his side, which was probably why he stood there for a second, urging Will to make his move. He gave Will the second he needed to gain the courage to knock on the door lightly.

"Hannibal?" He asked, voice sounding a little more high pitched than he would've preferred.

Instantly, as if Hannibal had his key out and ready, the lock clicked and the door opened. There Hannibal stood, dressed in nice slacks and a comfortable white button up. The top few buttons remained open, leaving Will to swallow hard at the sight of the exposed skin. He cursed himself for his resolve. He had to focus. He was Hannibal's lure, and he needed to keep reminding himself of that. They only had until tomorrow.

"Will, is everything alright?" Hannibal asked, doing a surprisingly horrible job of hiding the false obliviousness in his tone. He knew what Will wanted, and Will hated the smugness he got from it.

"Y-yes. I just….wanted to get out today. I think I've been cooped up for too long."

Hannibal's lips tilted into a cute smirk. "Of course, I'm glad you took some time for yourself. Would you like to join me today? I was actually going to take the day off, now that things are in better order."

Oh. "Oh," Will said dumbly. He snapped himself back to spit out a better response. "Well, I don't want to impose then-"

"Nonsense. Come, eat breakfast with me, mylimasis."

Hannibal still held the plate intended to be left at Will's door and turned to go back downstairs. Will followed behind, trailing behind Hannibal who looked like he couldn't be happier with life. The house was relatively empty as far as Will could tell. The dining room was also empty as they took their seats for breakfast. Hannibal's meal already sat at the head of the table, waiting for him as he put Will's on the place to his right.

“We have been low on eggs, so I do hope the smaller portions are enough.”

Will nodded, lifting his fork to examine the fluffy egg and accompanying sauce, fruit, and pastries.

“Sometimes I believe I wouldn’t run into these shortage problems if I was on my own instead, and didn’t have to make enough to feed such a large community,” Hannibal said, keeping his voice down and tone light hearted.

“Why are you still here then? If you think you’d do so much better on your own?”

Hannibal stayed quiet for a moment, and Will realized something then. Hannibal was just as conflicted as he was. This was probably the first time Will got a good reading on Hannibal, and that it surprised him. The man really was confused about his desires. He could imagine Hannibal torn between his current life and status and his feelings for Will. Of course this could all be manipulation, too. This could just be Hannibal trying to get Will on his side.

“It’s hard to grasp…what would’ve happened, what could’ve happened in…some other world.” Will found himself saying softly. He stared down at his half eaten croissant as he felt Hannibal’s eyes on him.

“I feel drawn to you in some way that I find difficult to describe. I feel like we would have made the same sort of connection under any circumstances.”

“And what is this connection?”

Hannibal inhaled deeply. “It can be whatever you allow it to be.”

“And I’m asking what you would allow it to be?”

Hannibal chuckled. “You already know the answer to that Will, there is no longer a need for denial.”

Will felt his cheeks blooming his heat as he turned his head away. He felt frustrated with Hannibal’s ability to get to him so much.

“But for now, let us simply enjoy each other’s company,” Hannibal offered, taking Will’s plate and his own, both clearly finished with their food. “I know I have thoroughly missed yours.”

Will jumped slightly as Hannibal leaned down to whisper into his ear. Hannibal laughed and left to wash the dishes. Will rudely chose not to help this time, but that didn’t seem to affect Hannibal’s cheery mood. The man still smiled brightly as he placed a hand on Will’s lower back to guide him out of the dining room and towards the front door.

“Will you accompany me to the orchards?”

Will raised his eyes at that. “We have orchards?”

Hannibal laughed, pressing their hips together for a moment as they walked to the van, side by side. Will ignored how comfortable he felt in the man’s hold.

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“That’s why you should have more variety. The more types of apple trees you have, the more cross pollination you have, and the better the apples are.”

“Is this from your history in gardening?” Hannibal asked as he listened to Will’s ramblings intently. He walked next to Will with his hands folded behind him, looking at Will with his head cocked to the side in innocent curiosity.

“Excuse you, I was head of maintenance for the house. I did a lot more than gardening.”

“Forgive me, for I have underestimated your talents once again,” Hannibal joked. “That is an excellent point. I wish I could’ve brought it up before the residents planted the orchard.”

Will hummed, admiring the strong, healthy trees they walked alongside.

“Most times I find my mind wandering away from this place,” Hannibal said, gazing at the trees now like Will.

“You keep saying things like that. Do you regret this?” Will finally flitted his eyes over to Hannibal, only for a second. He didn’t meet the man’s eyes, but could see the conflict in them.

Hannibal stayed quiet for a moment, contemplating the thought. “Ever since I met you, Will, yes. I do.”

Will stopped in his tracks. “What does that mean?”

“It means that you are the one who, how do you say, “threw a monkey wrench into my plans”?”

Will couldn’t stop the smile that invaded his face. He chuckled. “And you were the one who invaded our community.”

“And you were the one who caught my eye, who made me consider the concept of regret in the empire I have built. I never thought that I would have another regret in my life, until I met you. Then I feared I may have many more regrets than I ever imagined.”

“What was the first one?”

Hannibal's eyes grew distant, the sunlight that bounced off of them now looked duller. Will knew there was something buried in Hannibal's past, something he really itched to find out.

"My sister. She was not my child, but she was my charge. She taught me so much about myself. Her name was…Micha," Hannibal's voice remained solem and reminiscing.

"Was," Will repeated softly, feeling his heart ache a little for the man. This one event was most likely the one that altered his entire life.

"A cannibalistic gang attacked us, murdered our family and kept us prisoner. They took life eventually. I exacted my revenge eventually, once I escaped and started building all of this," Hannibal whispered his words coldly, this wound was still raw.

Will could imagine it almost perfectly. A happy family until the gang invaded and destroyed Hannibal's world as he knew it. They took the one thing that held him from his true nature. Once Micha was gone, Hannibal had no reason to hold back his instincts. Will could imagine the bloodbath that resulted from that. He pictured the war he raged over his sister's dead body, and he pictured the man who killed Micha, horribly mutilated by yours truly.

"I feel you have also recognized that moment in your life, though, when you started to discover your true nature, as well."

Will felt a surge of anger fly through him, but it left as soon as it came. Typically, he would've snapped at Hannibal and denied him. But he couldn't bring himself to do that at that moment. Instead, he found himself calm and in agreement as he considered the idea with a clearer mind.

"I have had a few," he said simply, reflecting on his father's death and the way he had his revenge on the zombie who killed him. He also thought about all of the other times he denied those dark intrusive thoughts that may not have been exactly as bad as what he initially imagined.

“We could leave tomorrow,” Hannibal whispered.

Will’s heart squeezed in longing, but he forced his eyes to remain on the trees. “You wouldn’t leave all of this.”

“I would. I have less and less desire for it. I feel myself drawn somewhere else now.”

“And what happens when that new desire fades as well. I become another meal at your dinner table?”

“As I said before, that is not how I see you, nor is that what you are to me. You are much more.”

Will exhaled shakily, crossing his arms. He knew that was a defensive move, but he didn’t care. “I can’t help but feel like it's manipulation.”

Hannibal didn’t answer immediately, instead he shifted closer to Will. He brought a hand up to run the tips of his fingers over the curls at the base of Will’s neck. “Let me show you my authenticity then,” Hannibal said, voice sounding breathless and silky. “Come with me, away from this place.”

“I want to,” Will wasn’t even sure if he said that loud enough for Hannibal to hear.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter is the overthrow :o what ever will happen?

Seven

Chapter Summary

The final fight.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The last letter Will received from Alana outlined the timeline of their plan. The day had come and the troops were rallying. Will sat on his cushioned bed, reading her precise words describing strict instructions. Most weren't meant for him, but for the others. The only one that mattered was the one informing Will of where he was to bring Hannibal.

Will gripped the paper in his hands as he processed the words.

...bring him to the south side of the house...

...Francis will be waiting behind the second oak tree from the pathway...

...you will run to the northern road...

... Jack and I will be waiting for you in the van...

His teeth clenched almost to the point of pain as he crushed the paper against his forehead. He was frustrated: frustrated at himself, at Hannibal, at Alana, Jack, Francis, Matthew. He was angry at the world. He wanted to cry over the thought of what he would have to do. Part of him wanted to just kill Hannibal himself. Pin him to the ground and straddle him. Will would reel his fist back and slam it into Hannibal's face over and over. The man would simply let it happen. He would smile sickly, blood leaking from his nose and between his teeth. He would enjoy the rage Will exacted in him. Then, Will would squeeze his throat until life bled from his eyes. Will would kill Hannibal with his bare hands, and then he would be

free of him. He would be free of manipulation, free of captivity, free of oppression, free of fear.

Or he could just let Francis have the sweet revenge. He'd be free either way. He'd be free of Hannibal, along with the man's love, admiration, touches, smile, company, brilliance, and beauty.

Will pounded his balled fists into his temples in anger at how much his heart ached, imagining this freedom. He knew he had to do this; he knew this was the best thing to do. He didn't want it though. He wanted to be selfish and run away. He wanted to run away with Hannibal, not with Alana and Jack.

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Hannibal cooked for Will again. He had his sleeves rolled up, showing off thick forearms as he shaved carrots for a garnish. Will didn't pay attention to the name of the dish Hannibal was making, but it was a lovely rabbit recipe. Hannibal sensed Will's tense mood, despite the boy denying it and pushing it off. Instead, Hannibal continued to cook and hum lightly as Will watched, sitting across the counter from him.

Beautiful smells invaded Will's nose as he stared at the setting sun outside. It cast the room in an orange and violet light. He had spent his last day in the library while Hannibal worked. Spending the day cooped up with his anxious thoughts about the uprising wasn't good for his nerves. They still had at least an hour of sunlight left, but Will wished it would last longer. Right as the sun set, Will would have to make his delivery.

"I respect your privacy, William, but I must ask once again, what is troubling you so? I can feel your intense thoughts from across the kitchen." Hannibal plated their food and nodded for Will to grab a lovely wine Hannibal had picked out for them.

Will wordlessly picked up the bottle along with 2 glasses, following Hannibal to the dining room. "I told you, I just have a lot on my mind after our conversation in the orchard."

“Have you come to an answer?” Will could hear the almost begging hope in Hannibal’s voice.

“I’ll tell you after dinner, maybe during a walk?” And so he planted the seed for his plan to go into motion.

“So you have come to a decision,” Hannibal said smugly as he sat at the head of the table and poured their wine.

“No,” Will lied. He had come to a decision indeed. Late at night as he laid staring at the ceiling, he thought of exactly what he would do.

Hannibal nodded. “There is no need to lie, Will.”

Will rolled his eyes. “That should be said for the two of us.”

Of course he knew the meat wasn’t rabbit. Will still dragged his knife across the slab of meat and stabbed it with his fork. He placed it over his tongue and savored the sweet savory flavor the sauce coated it with.

Hannibal laughed, taking his first bite as well. “I’m sorry.”

“No you aren’t,” Will said coldly, but a smile still dominated his face.

They ate the rest of their meal in a comfortable quiet. The entire time, Will could feel the food settling in his stomach like an iron weight. Swallowing it felt like ingesting cement. The sun soon came to the end of its descent, as the men cleaned their dishes. Hannibal offered his elbow to Will as they approached the front door. Will took it, feeling much like a courted lady in waiting as Hannibal escorted him outside. The sky was now a dark blue, a portion of it glowing from the full mood. It lit up the world, basking it in a strange white glow.

“It’s tonight,” Will said finally, breaking the silence as they approached the hill that would bring them to a pair of twin oak trees, that would bring them to Francis.

Hannibal kept his eyes ahead, away from Will as he raised his other hand to place it over where Will’s hands were folded on his elbow. “So soon? I wished to relish our time together a little longer.”

Of course Hannibal knew about the uprising. That was most likely why he was so okay with the regret he held for the empire he built. He was okay with it because he knew of its soon destruction.

“Do you intend to watch him kill me?” Hannibal asked simply.

“I intend to watch him change you.”

It was obvious to the two of them that Francis didn’t see killing as killing, but as change.

“My compassion for you is inconvenient, Will.”

“If you're impartial to beef products, it is inconvenient to be compassionate toward a cow,” Will replied in a robotic tone, trying to stay focused on the mission at hand.

As they trudged over the grass, Hannibal’s thumb started stroking over the top of one of Will’s hands. “Save yourself, and kill them all?”

“I don’t know if I can save myself… maybe that’s just fine.” Will knew Francis wouldn’t let him leave without a fight. According to him, as Will had assessed with his empathy, Francis would want to slaughter Will as well. He was looking to fuel his other self, The Dragon, and he wanted all the strength he could find. That included Will’s own.

They had approached the twin oaks by now. Will didn't even have time to spot where Francis was hiding before a bullet struck Hannibal in the side. Hannibal shoved Will away from him, stumbling back and falling onto the grass. Will watched, hands shaking and sweaty as Hannibal grabbed his bloody abdomen. Hannibal weezed as Francis crept out from the tree he was crouched behind. He tossed the handgun he had shot Hannibal with aside, letting it bounce onto the grass.

"Hello Francis," Hannibal said politely, gritting his teeth from the pain of the sharp bullet lodged in his body.

"Hello, sir," Francis mocked. "As dying, you meld with the strength of the Dragon." Francis spoke as if he were narrating for an audience. He stepped towards them with slow and fluid-like movements.

"It's a glorious and rather discomforting idea," Hannibal grimaced, looking up at Will.

Will reached into the back of his waistband to grab the hidden razor he had stored there, but before he could, Francis pounced. The man jabbed a pocket knife into the side of Will's face, using his other hand to lift Will into the air. Will gasped as he was thrown across the lawn. He soon found his bearings and ripped the knife from his cheek, letting the blood pour from it and down into his crisp white shirt. He turned and drove the knife into Francis' leg as the man had started to approach Will from behind. Francis copied Will's last move, and ripped the knife out and stabbed Will again, this time in the shoulder.

Before he could make another move, though, Hannibal jumped onto Francis and grabbed his head with both hands, twisting his neck in an attempt to snap it. His attempt was foiled, however, as Francis used his superior strength to throw the cult leader over his shoulder. The Dragon stalked over to Hannibal, grabbing his throat to try and strangle him.

Will pulled himself together again, now covered in red as he pulled the knife from his shoulder and plunged it into Francis twice. His heart was pounding with pure adrenaline as his body moved on its own. He seemed to be lost in his instincts, only focused on killing Francis, and he loved it.

Francis punched Will, sending him rolling a few feet away as he turned to Hannibal to knee him in the face. Hannibal grabbed a knife he had concealed on his figure, and he and Will

started attacking Francis from the ground. They sliced at his legs together, each taking a turn to swipe at the flesh and draw fountains of crimson. It spewed all over them, mixing with their own.

Hannibal pounced onto Francis' back once again, trapping him in a head lock as Will sprinted towards them. Will dug the knife into his chest as Hannibal ripped a chunk of flesh from Francis' throat.

Francis collapsed, blood flowing from under him, spreading out in the grass as if they were wings. The wings of a slain dragon.

Will stayed hunched on the ground, raising a blood covered hand to Hannibal. The other man grabbed it, his own hands shaky and wet with blood. He used what little strength he had left and pulled Will to stand up next to him.

"See," Hannibal wheezed, panting as he supported Will's weight along with his own. "This is all I ever wanted for you, Will."

Will stayed quiet, panting as he looked at Francis' corpse in the moonlight. His blood looked black.

"For both of us," Hannibal finished, looking at Will.

Will finally raised his pale blue eyes to meet Hannibal's maroon ones. "It's beautiful."

They stood in the field, as all around them were gunshots, screams, and shouts of fighting. Will's nose even caught the scent of smoke rising from their left. Chaos surrounded them on all sides, but they remained in their own bubble of solitude. Will leaned forward, letting Hannibal take almost all of his weight now. A hand grabbed Will's waist, pulling him to press his entire body flush into Hannibal's. Will rested his head on Hannibal's warm chest as Hannibal rested his own atop Will's blood soaked curls. They held each other in that moment, holding this moment in their hearts. Will pulled his arm up, wrapping it around Hannibal's neck, hugging him tightly. He realized he never wanted to let go.

He realized he never wanted to leave Hannibal.

Here, he realized what he really wanted to do at that moment. He realized what he truly was. He realized what he truly felt.

Will pulled on Hannibal's hair to tilt his head towards Will. They looked into each other's eyes for a moment, panting into each other's faces. Will was the one who leaned up first. He craned his neck and pressed his lips onto Hannibal's.

"Run away with me," Hannibal whispered, cupping Will's cheek and bringing him into another sweet kiss.

"Okay," Will whispered back, letting the kiss consume him.

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Chapter End Notes

Last chapter is kinda shorter, but I hope you enjoyed! This was so fun to write and I hope it was just as fun to read. Please drop any kudos and comments you have, I love to hear thoughts :) Thank you for reading!

I might be doing another part to this, just a bonus fluffy one shot of Hannibal and Will's new life on their own. Maybe with Abigail?

End Notes

So excited for this story. It is definitely one of my favorites :) please comment and let me know what you think!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!